Monsters with Little Dogs

for concert band, organ, free drummer, amplified double bass and conducted improvisation

by Barry R. Morse

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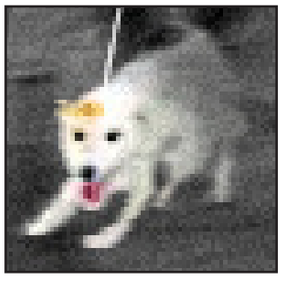
Composed for and first performed by Dr. Donald K. Miller and the Adams State University Wind Ensemble, Alamosa, Colorado, April 22, 2014



Instrumentation

Monsters with Little Dogs is largely for unspecified winds and percussion, with a few exceptions. The winds are grouped into High Woodwinds (HW), Low Woodwinds (LW), High Brass (HB) and Low Brass (LB). Not all of these instruments are vital. The more of these instruments are present and in greater numbers, the thicker and more dissonant the rendition will be. A performance with fewer forces is possible as long as the parts are covered. The conductor and players should be sensitive to instrumental choices and balance. Any of the following instruments may participate in each section:

High Woodwinds:

- C piccolos
- C flutes
- Bb clarinets
- Eb clarinets
- Oboes

Low Woodwinds:

- Horns
- English horns
- Bb tenor saxophones
- Eb baritone saxophones
- Bb bass clarinets
- Bassoons
- Contra bassoons

High Brass:

- Bb trumpets
- C trumpets
- D trumpets
- Bb soprano saxophones
- Eb alto saxophones

Low Brass:

- Euphoniums
- Tenor trombones
- Bass trombones
- Tuba

Percussion: (4 players)

a. Hand percussion: all players should have access to at least 1 hand percussion instrument, exotic (non-Western) instruments are welcome (Conga, Djembe, Bongos, etc.). There should be at least 4 different kinds.

b. Metal percussion: at least 4 kinds including cow bells, triangles, automobile brake drums, junk, toys etc. In addition, player 2 must have access to suspended cymbal and medium tam-tam or gong. Player 3 must have access to large tam-tam/gong.

c. Mallet percussion: 4 kinds of mallet instruments if possible (marimba, Glockenspiel, vibraphone, etc.). If not, two players may double on one instrument. Player 1 must have access to xylophone.

d. Keyboard percussion: Four (4) kinds of keyboard instruments if possible (piano, celesta, synthesizers, etc.). If not, two players can double on one instrument, excluding the “pipe organ.”

e. Player 4 must have a “silent” dog whistle.

Organ:

One player is a dedicated organ player using a “pipe organ” patch on a synthesizer if a real pipe organ is not available. A *sostenuto* pedal is useful but not vital in one place.

Drum Set:

The drummer must be comfortable with "free" improvisational drumming. This is drumming that may be fast or slow, loud or soft but which avoids regular patterns and styles while keeping a somewhat constant pulse (at least for this piece). Improvisational drummers use the entire instrument as well as "toys" that may be attached to the set. While working largely independently of the conductor and other players (in this piece) drummer should be sensitive to dynamics and general style. Excellent examples of "free drumming" are videos of Hamid Drake and Billy Higgins.

Double bass:

An upright string bass is required with a "jazz" style player using both bow (*arco*) and jazz-style fingered *pizzicato* using the side of the fingers. The string bass should be amplified but electric bass guitar should be avoided. The bass player will essentially be "comping" a "walking bass" line using notated patterns and pitch sets with improvisation in and around such given patterns.

General Performance Notes

The score to *Monsters with Little Dogs* is transposed. All players read directly from the score, playing the notes as they see them for their instrument *without transposing*. This will result in parallel chords of seconds, fifths, major sixths, etc. when, for example, Bb, C and D trumpets play the same notated pitches as Horns and Eb alto saxophones. C flutes and Bb clarinets will be in very close harmony (major seconds) while the Low Brass will be mostly in octaves.
Where otherwise unison parts are divided into pyramid figures (LB at D, HB shortly after) the lowest instruments in any group (likely tuba and alto sax respectively) should hold the lowest tone, and the highest instruments should play the highest notes, middle instruments hold inner pitches, etc. These assignments may need to be specified beforehand and will depend upon how many instruments in a group are available.

The conductor is required in some sections to conduct the entire ensemble normally (introduction). Sometimes some groups are conducted normally while other groups are proceeding independently of the conductor and other players (E_1). At other times the conductor is using "new" techniques to direct the ensemble in very free sections such as at A and C.

Duration is determined by the conductor. While metered sections are generally short, the open A and C sections are intended to be much lengthier, allowing time for the guided improvisations to create their own form. Good taste, a sense of timing and the skills and willingness of the ensemble to relax into the style will help to determine the duration of such sections.

Specific Performance Notes and Strategies

HW: All piccolos, flutes, clarinets and oboes begin playing continuous figure on downbeat cue. Each player proceeds at own speed and breathes where necessary. Entire figure may be repeated as needed. Unless conductor chooses to drop out all players (see Strategy below) this figure should run continuously. This HW figure can be considered to be Theme 1.

A Strategy: Conductor may control HW texture and mix by pointing at individual players to either join playing or to drop out. When players rejoin group they may start anywhere in the figure. Pointing to players and tapping top of his/her own head indicates that specified players should start over at the beginning "top" (see signals notes). This can create a feeling of cohesion if the group gets too separated from each other. By selectively dropping out C instruments or Bb instruments, the sound becomes less dissonant.

Dm Set: Drummer plays continuous improvisation with a fast pulse, not with other players. Brushes should be used.

Strategy: Conductor can control density of drumming by signaling to drummer for more "space" (see signals notes) or for "more activity." Conductor also always has the option to control volume with traditional gestures.

Dbl Bass: "Walking bass" style using given patterns and pitch sets as well as improvisation based on those patterns. Tempo is fast but not necessarily with the drummer's pulse.

LW/HB/LB: Against the foreground of the HW, Dm Set and Dble Bass Theme 1 streams are background events cued by the conductor. Not all of these events need to be used. Events may be repeated. Events 1 and 2 concern LW, HB and/or LB at conductor's discretion, event 3 is only for LB, etc. Pyramid events 4 and 5 may either be conducted (point to individual players to build pyramid) or with single cue allow players to randomly fill in pyramid. Pitched percussion, which may be mallet or keyboard instruments, is at discretion of players.
Perc: Events 1 and 2 are played on cue either as a group or individually. Conductor signals players which kind of percussion instrument to use: pointing to the palm =hand percussion, an "M" shape with three fingers down=metal, mallet gestures with the hands=mallet instruments and wiggling of the fingers=keyboard instrument (any keyboard instrument except the "pipe organ" patch) (see signal notes page). Pitched instruments play any downward pattern of random pitches.

Strategy: Conductor can create complex backgrounds with some cuing strategies and players who are familiar with the signals. Conductor should always first, get players' attention through eye contact; second, cue individual players or whole groups by pointing; third, indicate which event by holding up number of fingers; fourth, indicate articulation, whether to play long tones or "punches" (see signals page); fifth, dynamic level; then finally sixth, the actual cue/downbeat to trigger the event. With thoughtful planning, conductor can shape interesting background events that may be quite conplex. For example, while the main Theme 1 stream is progressing independently, conductor signals for percussionists to prepare to play event 1 on hand percussion and to play it strongly. Next conductor signals to HB to play event 2 as long tones. Then, he/she signals for LB to play event 3. When ready, conductor cues all three groups in rapid sequence resulting in a barrage of percussion followed by a HB sustaind chord which is held while LB plays a loud low tone which cuts off both events on a downbeat cue. Such shaping of the form is done spontaneously in performance and the sight of the conductor coming off the podium, without a score and interacting directly and immediately with live musicians will be both drammatic for the audience and give a sense of connection with his/her players not achievable with traditional conductor-performer interactions.

C

Perc./Dm Set/Dbl Bass: At C conductor cues Perc/Dm Set/Dbl Bass to begin playing individual patterns or either 3, 5 or 7 beat patterns by holding up fingers. Players can choose any tempo but must stay with that choice until cued to change pattern. If conductor feels that the patterns are too busy he/she can use the sign for "space." A sign for "more activity" will do the opposite. Players should not necessarily fill those patterns with sound anyway: leaving space will allow for a more integrated sound. Dbl Bass can play any pitches. As they play percussionists will start with one kind of instrument group (hand, metal, mallet or keyb'd) and change to another group, in the given order, at their own discretion, trying to maintain their original pattern. Players should not change too quickly or too often but rather allow for the prevailing sound mix to be absorbed. Players may double up on keyboard or mallet instruments if necessary. "Pipe organ" should not be used here. It may be that all instrumental kinds are not used by any one player or by Perc. group at all. This is acceptable. Conductor may hold up a letter "c" shape with his/her hand indicating for player(s) to play "coloristically." This means to make interesting sounds/noises without any particular rhythmic pattern. More space than sound is preferred.

Strategy: Conductor should get this stream of activity going right at C before the next step is taken so that sound is happening while conductor implements the "clock."

The Clock: Once the percussion stream is set in motion conductor moves his/her arm in a large circle as if it were the arm of an enormous clock (clock "hour" positions for conductor will be opposite to those seen by the performers). Groups and soloists play their assigned events when they think the conductor's arm has reached the affiliated "hour" position. Not everyone will agree when the conductor's arm is at the "1 o'clock" position, for example. This will lead to sounds from one event to "bleed" into the sounds of an adjacent event. This is desireable and will be more pronounced when the conductor's arm moves very slowly. For events that have a metered melody (the "3 and 8 o'clock" positions), the first player to begin playing the event should be joined and followed by subsequent players in the group so as to be as unified as possible. Nevertheless without being conducted in tempo (the conductor's arm is occupied---unless he/she can beat tempo with the other hand!) these events will probably be a little ragged. This is not a serious problem.

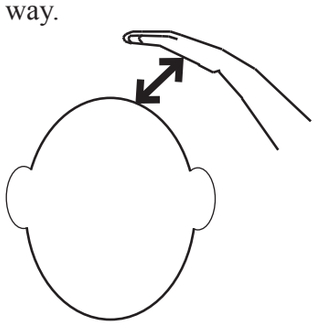
Strategy: Conductor can continue this section for as long as he/she wants. As it is an "open" free-form section some time should be taken to allow for interesting musical effects to happen. For example, conductor may change speeds of the clock arm, resulting in a sonic mish-mash as players try to keep up with faster arm movements. Conductor may also move in reverse direction "counter-clockwise" in order to repeat an event. The clock arm may also "jump" across the clock face without traversing the intervening hour positions. Players will have to watch closely. By retracting his/her arm conductor can call for silence from the winds while the percussion continue their stream. Conductor may use that time to signal Perc/Dm Set/Dbl Bass to change up the patterns, drop out, change dynamics, etc. Conductor may also experiment with "freezing" one event (using the free hand in a traditional "fermata" gesture directed at one group of players) while continuing to move the clock arm to another position, thus creating a multi-layered effect. Both arms may even be used where each arm represents opposite sides of the ensemble, again, for creating a kind of polyphony.

E_1

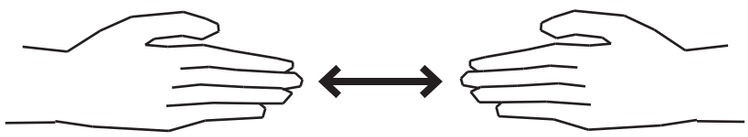
At E_1 conductor directs each melody note individually, using short and long durations in irregular rhythmic patterns. *Tenuto* and breath marks signal the ends of each phrase. Metered conducting returns in part at E_4.

Partial List of Signals

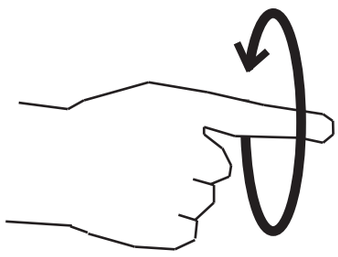
Conductor and players should become fluent in the use and understanding of these signals. Conductor is free to alter or substitute his/her own prefered signals as well as adding any that may have been overlooked that would prove useful. Some of these signals and much of the inspiration for this composition are due to having briefly worked with Mr. Adam Rudolph, composer and director of the Go: Organic Orchestra, and Mr. Tatsuya Nakatani, free-drummer and director of the Nakatani Gong Orchestra. Any short-comings of this "conduction" (conducted improvisation) technique are entirely my own and do not reflect upon Mr. Rudolph and Mr. Nakatani in any way.



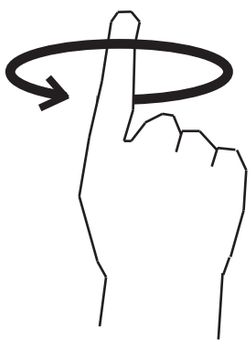
Conductor taps top of head= selected players play from beginning of section, "top"



Hands pulled apart= more space, less activity, also long notes

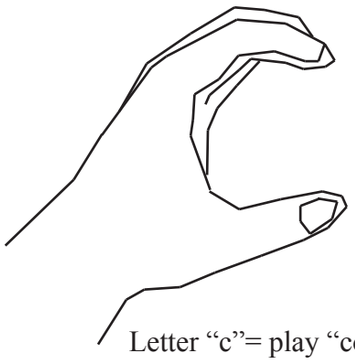


Horizontal roll= more activity



Vertical roll= keep going, don't stop until cued to stop

Punch= play given pitch as a one-time short, *sfz*



Letter "c"= play "coloristically", non-rhythmic sound effects

Monsters with Little Dogs

for Concert Band, Organ, Free Drummer, Amplified Double Bass and Conducted Improvisation

In Tempo ♩=54, Ominously

AFAP, not with others or conductor

High Woodwinds — all players — pp

Low Woodwinds — T.sax/B. sax/Bs. cl; E. Hn./Hn.; Bssn.; Ctr.Bssn — mf, p, mp, f

High Brass — all players, tpts. different mutes — legato — mp, mf

Low Brass — all players, different mutes — legato — T.tbn./Euph. (*div.*); Bs.tbn; Tba. — p, mf, mp, f

Percussion — 1 2 3 4 — 2. sus. cymbal, med. mallets; 3. lg. tam-tam, soft mallet — mp, mf, f

Organ — "pipe organ" patch

Drum Set — floor tom, mallets — p, mf, mp, f

Double Bass — *arco, sul pont.* — p, mf, mp, f

accelerando...

molto accelerando... — *sim.*

HW — p, f, fff — G.P.

LW — mf, ff, fff — G.P.

HB — open — mf, f, fff — G.P.

LB — open — mf, ff, f, fff — G.P.

Perc — mf, ff, f, fff — G.P.

Org — G.P.

Dm Set — to brushes — mf, ff, fff — G.P.

Dbl Bass — *ord.* — mf, ff, f, fff — *pizz.*

A *Senza misura*

♩ = 112-144 phrasing *ad lib*., not with others

HW

LW

HB

LB

Perc *Senza misura*

Org

wire, rute or broomstick type brushes

solo

Dm Set

Free improvisational drumming, keep fast pulse (♩=126-144), not with other players, avoid patterns, styles and mere time-keeping

solo ♩= 126-144

Dbl Bass

Improvisational "walking bass," keep steady quarter note beat, fast tempo, not with others, use given patterns and improvise others in similar manner, use full range of instrument, use any 4-note sets within a P4, repeat *ad lib*, drop octaves *ad lib,* use pitches in any order within set

etc.

rhythmic pattern suggestions

HW

LW

HB

LB

Perc

Org

Dm Set

Dbl Bass

LW HB LB ① different mutes, any 8va

LW HB LB ② different mutes, any 8va

LB ③ on cue *sffz*

Perc all players ① not with others, if pitched H-L

Perc all players ② not with others, if pitched H-L

etc.

pitch set suggestions

HW

LW

HB

LB

Perc

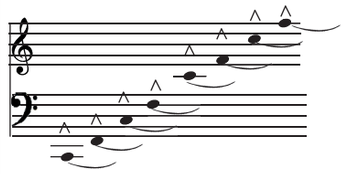
Org

Dm
Set

Dbl
Bass

④ bell tones (pyramid), attack-sustain *ad lib*.,cut off on cue

LW
HB
LB
Perc



⑤ bell tones (pyramid), attack-sustain *ad lib*.,cut off on cue

LW
HB
LB
Perc

HW

LW

HB

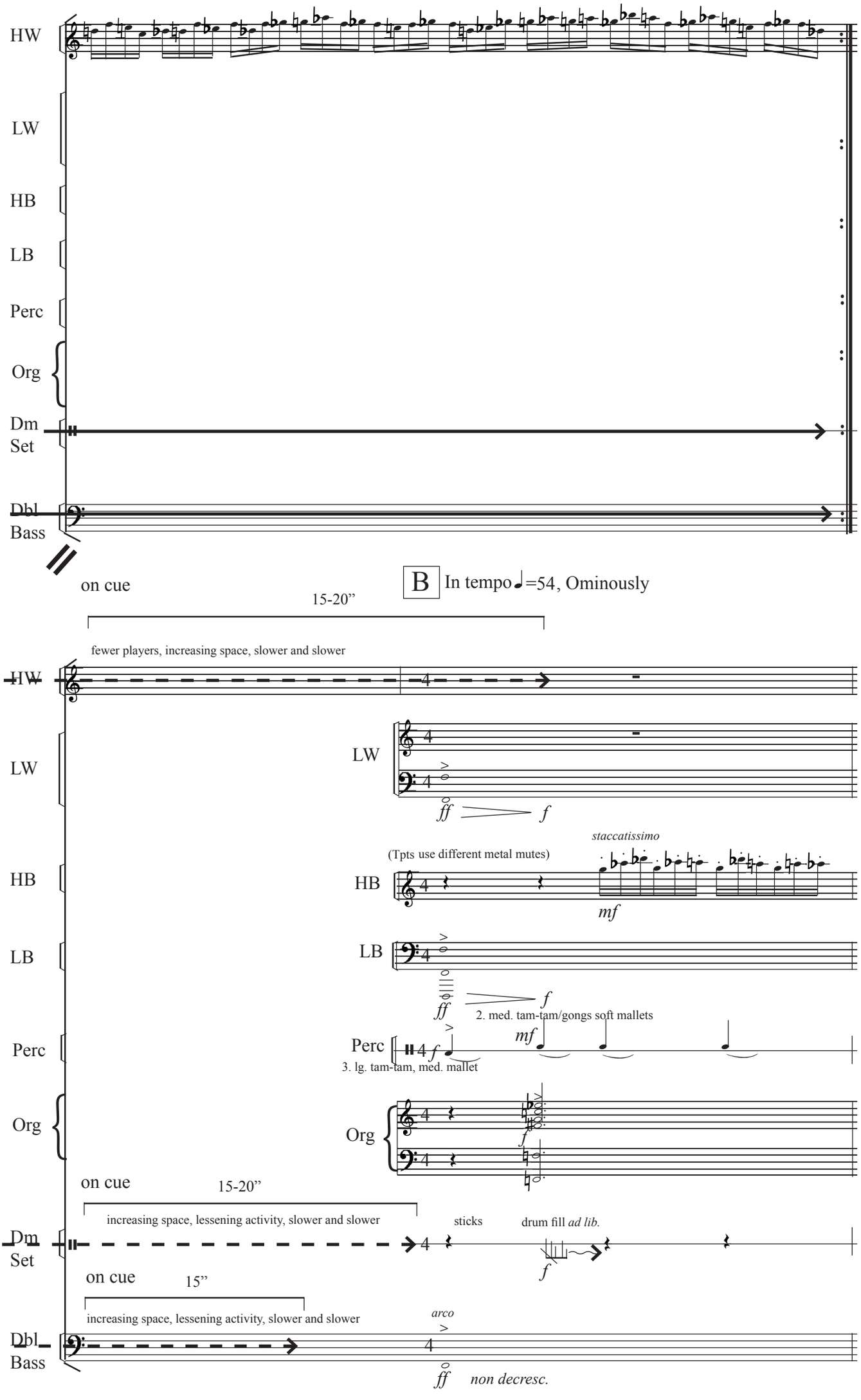
LB

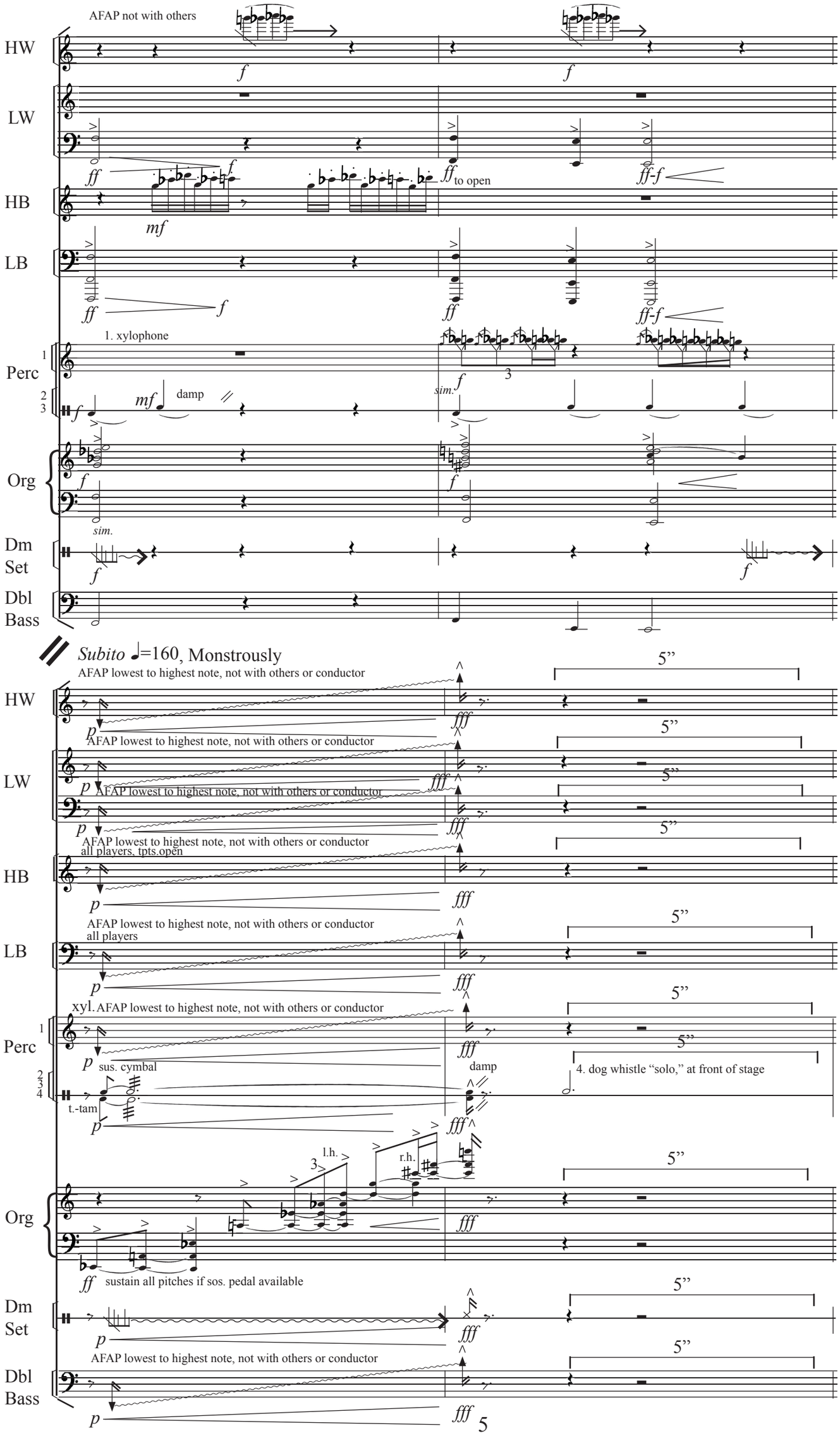
Perc

Org

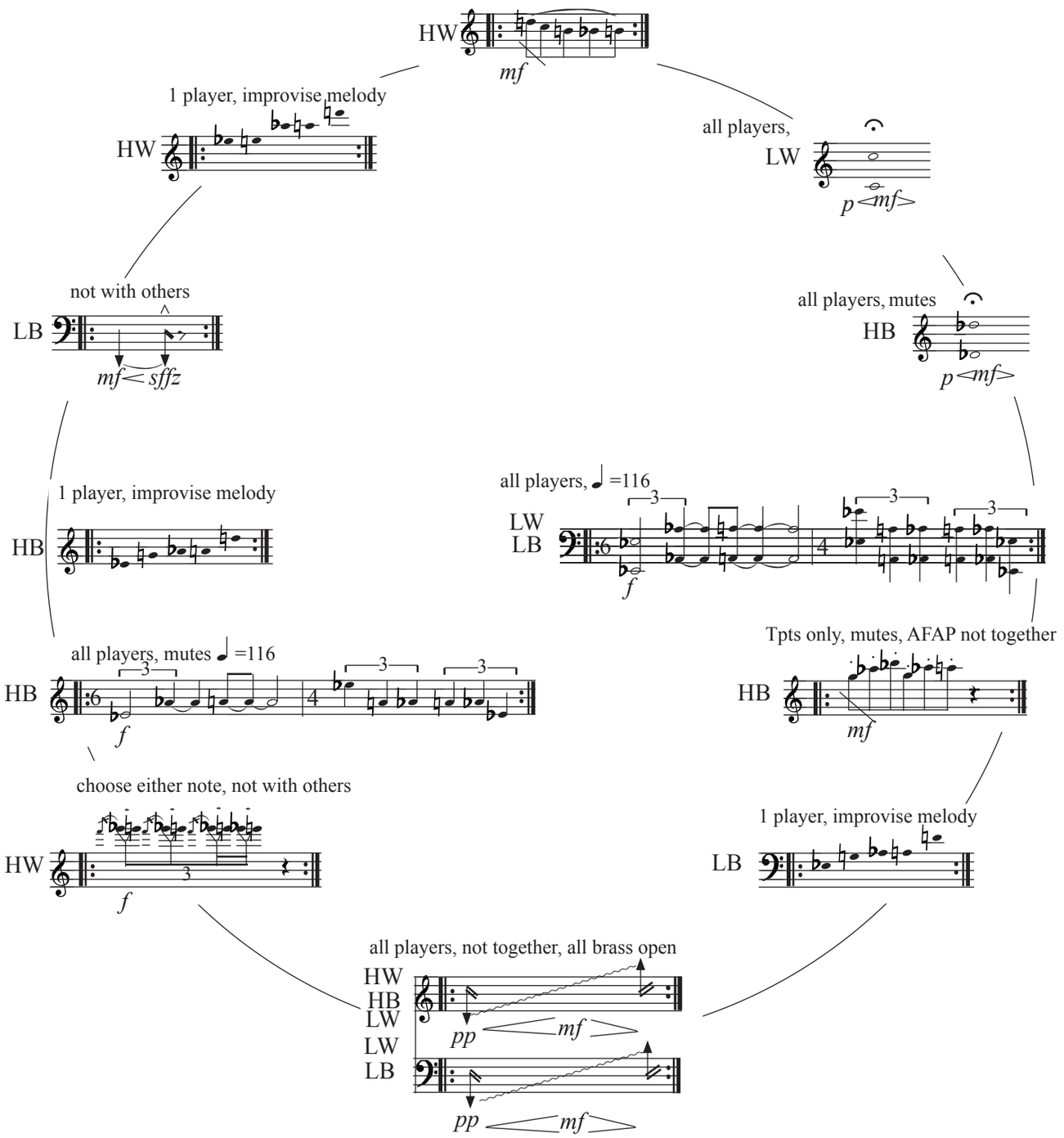
Dm
Set

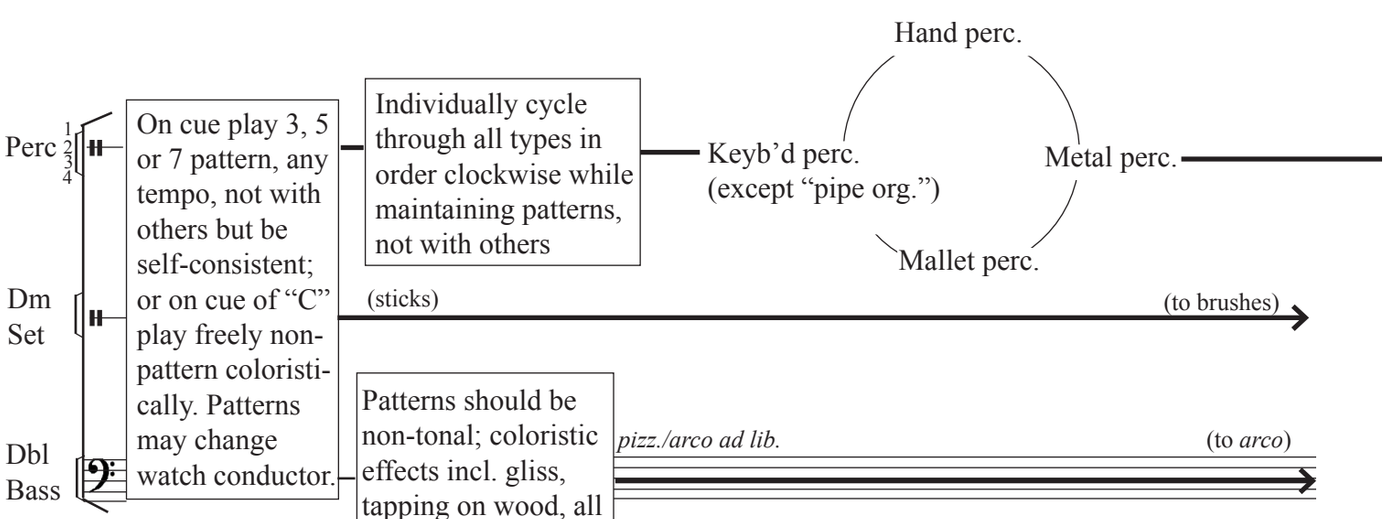
Dbl
Bass


HW
LW
HB
LB
Perc
Org
Dm
Set
Dbl
Bass
on cue
B
In tempo ♩=54, Ominously
15-20”
fewer players, increasing space, slower and slower
ff
f
staccatissimo
(Tpts use different metal mutes)
mf
2. med. tam-tam/gongs soft mallets
3. lg. tam-tam, med. mallet
on cue
15-20”
increasing space, lessening activity, slower and slower
sticks
drum fill ad lib.
on cue
15”
increasing space, lessening activity, slower and slower
arco
non decresc.


AFAP not with others
HW
LW
HB
LB
1. xylophone
Perc
damp
sim.
Org
Dm Set
Dbl Bass
Subito ♩=160, Monstrously
AFAP lowest to highest note, not with others or conductor
5”
all players, tpts.open
all players
xyl.
sus. cymbal
t.-tam
4. dog whistle “solo,” at front of stage
l.h.
r.h.
sustain all pitches if sos. pedal available

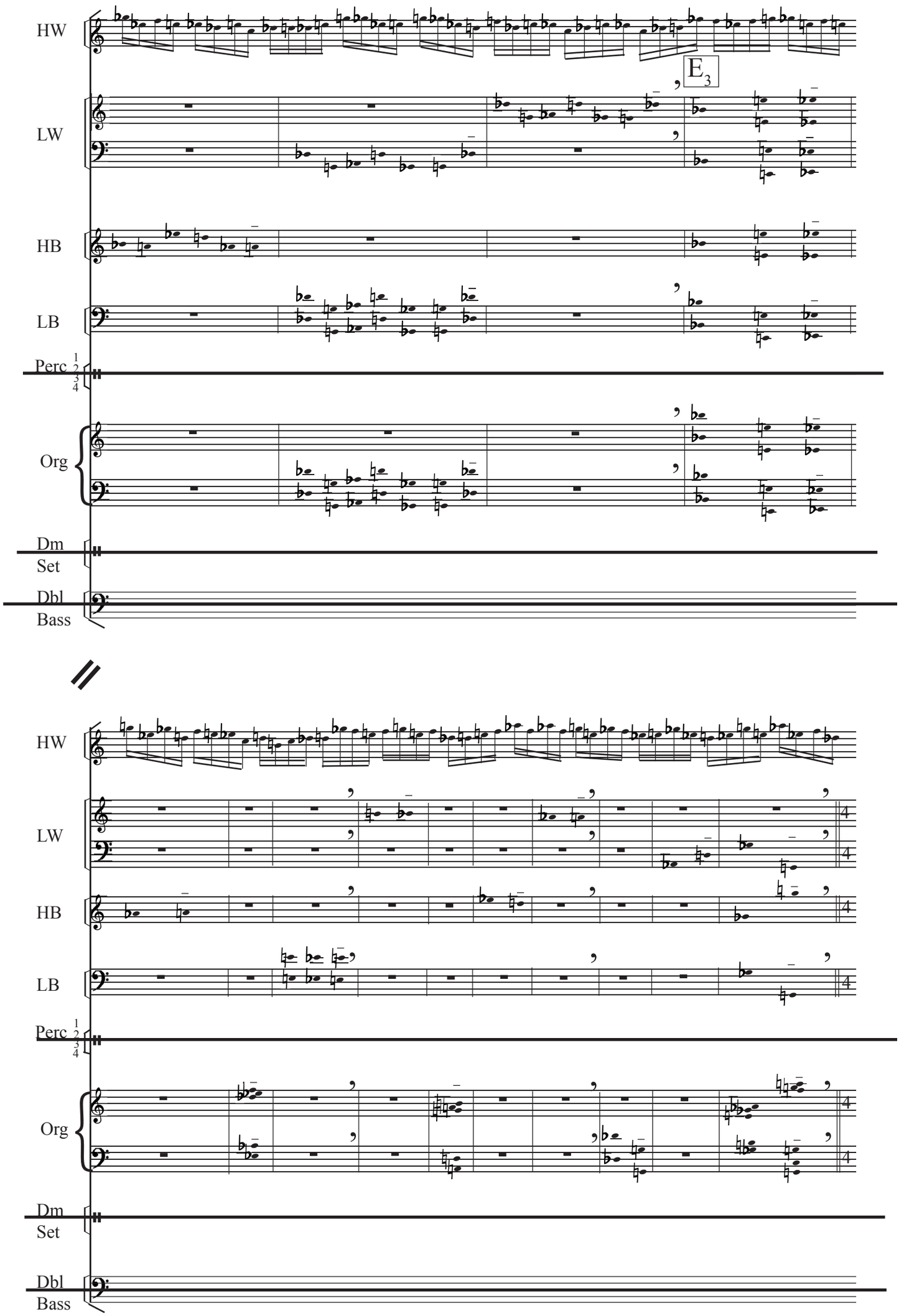
C *Senza misura*



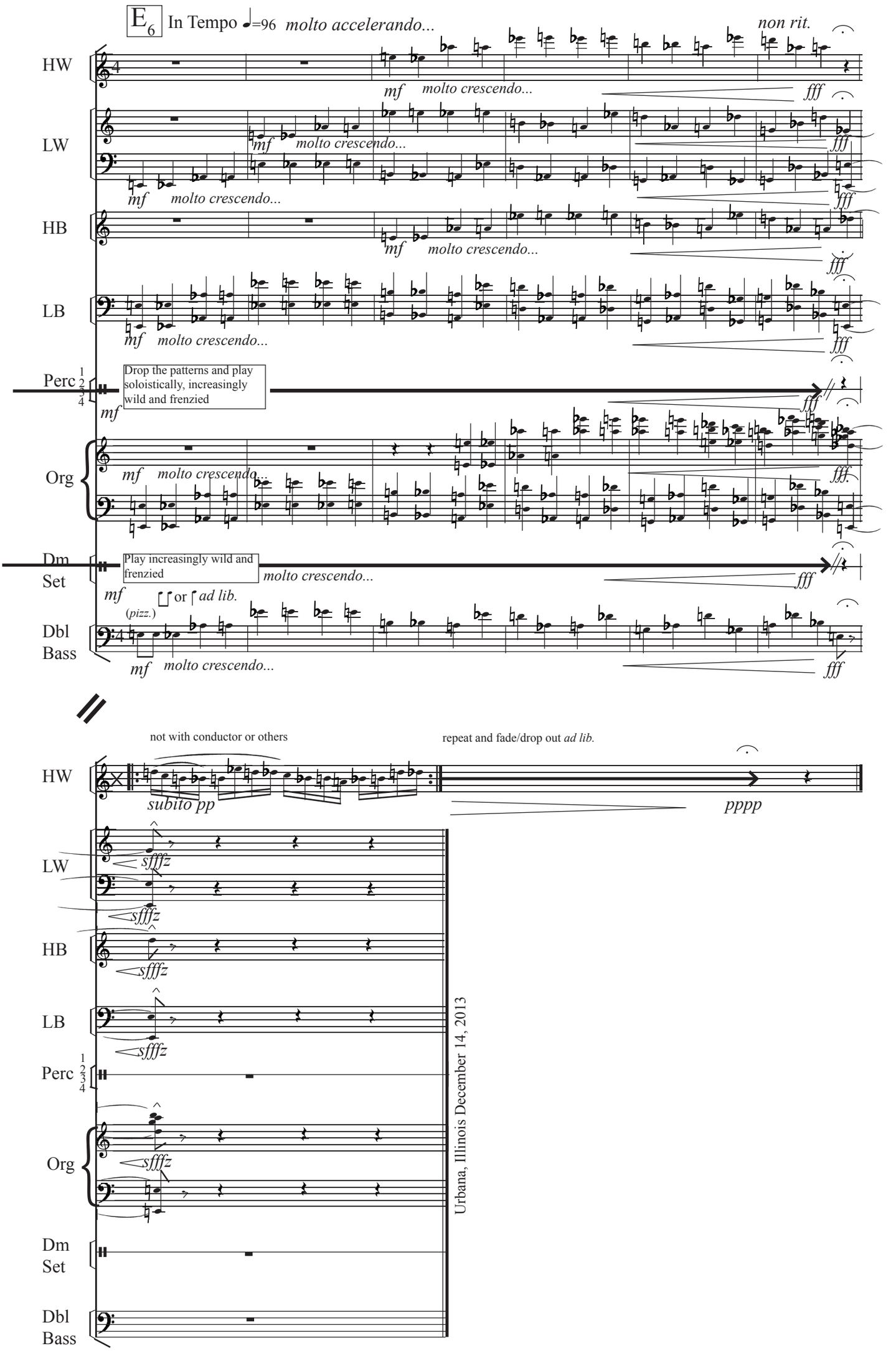

Hand perc.
Perc
1
2
3
4
On cue play 3, 5 or 7 pattern, any tempo, not with others but be self-consistent; or on cue of "C" play freely non-pattern coloristically. Patterns may change watch conductor.
Individually cycle through all types in order clockwise while maintaining patterns, not with others
Keyb'd perc. (except "pipe org.")
Metal perc.
Mallet perc.
Dm Set
(sticks)
(to brushes)
Dbl Bass
Patterns should be non-tonal; coloristic effects incl. gliss, tapping on wood, all effects, etc.
pizz./arco ad lib.
(to arco)

D
In Tempo ♩=54, Ominously
AFAP, not with others or conductor
all players
HW
LW
legato
mf
p
mf
mp
f
all players, different mutes if possible
legato
HB
mp
mf
all players, different mutes if possible
legato
LB
p
mf
mp
f
continue to play last pattern cycling through hand, metal, mallet and keyb'd perc. (except "pipe org."), not with others or conductor
Perc
mp
Org
mp
mf
Dm Set
brushes
solo fill
pp
arco, sul pont.
Dbl Bass
p
mf
mp
f
accelerando...
molto accelerando...
sim.
HW
p
f
fff
LW
mf
ff
open
f
cresc...
fff
HB
mf
f
f
fff
open
LB
mf
ff
mf
f
fff
Perc
continue playing through pause
fff
subito mf
Org
mf
f
f
fff
Dm Set
to sticks
p
f
fff
ord.
Dbl Bass
mf
ff
mf
f
fff
pizz.

E1
Senza misura
♩= 112-144 phrasing ad lib., not with conductor or others
HW
mp to ff ad lib.
Conductor very freely cues each note in irregular patterns of long and short durations where the durations vary = 112-144; and are short and long phrase endings respectively
each note on cue
(open)
LW
tenuto
sim.
(open)
f
HB
each note on cue
(open)
tenuto
sim.
LB
f
Perc
continue cycling through instrument groups, patterns now cycle 3-5-7 beats ad lib. not with others or conductor, change tempo with each pattern
mp to ff ad lib.
each note on cue
Org
f
tenuto
sim.
Dm Set
Free improvisational drumming, keep fast pulse (♩=126-144), not with other players, avoid patterns, styles and mere time-keeping
with sticks
mp to ff ad lib.
Dbl Bass
Improvisational "walking bass," keep steady quarter note beat, (♩= 126-144) fast tempo, not with others, use given patterns and improvise others in similar manner, use full range of instrument
pizz.
f
HW
E2
LW
f
HB
f
LB
Perc
Org
Dm Set
Dbl Bass
Continue pattern cycling through all 12 chromatic keys, if time remains improvise on similar patterns


HW
LW
HB
LB
Perc
Org
Dm
Set
Dbl
Bass
E3

repeat as needed
HW
E4 In Tempo ♩=96, Broadly, with weight, regular rhythms as notated
rit.
LW
ten.
mf
HB
ten.
LB
mf
Perc
Org
mf
Dm
Set
Dbl
Bass
E5 fewer players, increasing space, slower and slower
HW
E5 In Tempo ♩=96 poco accel...
rit.
LW
mf
f
mf
HB
LB
mf
f
mf
Perc
Org
mf
f
mf
Dm
Set
E5 In Tempo ♩=96
synchronize beat to conductor
Dbl
Bass


E6 In Tempo ♩=96 molto accelerando...
non rit.
HW
LW
HB
LB
Perc
Org
Dm Set
Dbl Bass
mf molto crescendo...
fff
Drop the patterns and play soloistically, increasingly wild and frenzied
Play increasingly wild and frenzied
(pizz.) or ad lib.
not with conductor or others
repeat and fade/drop out ad lib.
subito pp
pppp
sfffz
Urbana, Illinois December 14, 2013